



ARISE

April 23rd, 2025

House Bill 5836 – “Our History, Our Schools, Our Future: About Ethnic Studies Bill”

Dear Chair McNamara and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Michelle and I am a Youth Leader at ARISE. I am writing to support House Bill No. 5836 because I believe everyone has the right to be able to learn about their history. As a Dominican Afro-Latina who moved to the United States at a very young age, it's been hard not knowing what my people went through and feeling so disconnected from my people. I go to a high school that is full of people of color, people who look like me.

An ethnic studies curriculum will help my school tremendously because they will not only learn about their history, but also feel connected with their ancestors that came before them. The amount of opportunities I've been given in classrooms to be able to learn about the hardships my country has faced is little to none. It would be a good chance to finally learn about the history of my people and actually speak about the oppression they faced, and not whitewashing that history. Ethnic studies will also help students participate in class because by learning about their own personal identity, they will be engaged. I urge you to support Bill No. 5836, because those that come from oppressed ethnic groups should have the opportunity to learn about their history in their classrooms.

Thank you,

Michelle
9th Grade